

## **Transcription: Bret Adams**

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*Today is Thursday, December 15, 2011. My name is James Crabtree, and this morning I'll be interviewing Mr. Bret Adams. This interview is taking place in the General Land Office building in Austin, Texas. It is in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. Sir, thank you for taking the time to come down and talk to us. It's always an honor any time we get to interview a veteran. I guess the first question I always like to start with is just tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went in the military.*

**Bret Adams:** I was fortunate enough to travel, thanks to my dad. Born west coast, California. Spent most of my elementary years in the middle west, near Saint Louis. Spent some time out in the east coast, again thanks to Dad. And then, actually went overseas, thanks to Dad.

*Was your dad in the military?*

**Bret Adams:** Should have been. He was working with McDonnell Douglas and then General Dynamics. He took us over to Belgium. That's where I graduated from high school, and I think that traveling kind of sparked my interest. And then being around him as an aircraft engineer, so that kind of rolled into being interested in the military, the Air Force. And then, I can't remember the reason why, but I applied for, and was accepted to college, at the time, North Texas State University, UNT now, up in Denton.

*Were you living in Texas at that time?*

**Bret Adams:** No. I was in Belgium.

*In Belgium? You just picked Texas?*

**Bret Adams:** I think because my father had been hired through the Fort Worth office. And I thought he and my mom and my brother would come back there after about three years. But 16 years later, they finally came back.

*So you graduated from high school in Belgium and you come to North Texas for school. At that point you had already thought you kind of wanted to go in the military?*

**Bret Adams:** I think I played with the idea. And then, strangely enough, I met my ex-wife and she was in ROTC. After several discussions with her, and I had thought, "Well, why not?" And I applied for Officer Training School and got accepted and that's how I got my commission.

*That's great. Now what years were these?*

**Bret Adams:** That was '85 when I got commissioned. 1985.

*What was it that attracted you to the Air Force, besides your future wife? Was it a connection with your dad, having been an engineer?*

**Bret Adams:** I like jets. I like planes. It fascinated me. I was hoping I could fly. That was my ultimate goal. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to because of my eyesight at the time.

*Tell us about what the Air Force was like in 1985.*

**Bret Adams:** Those were the days of SAC, Strategic Air Command. My first assignment was Minot, North Dakota.

*Okay. Could be pretty cold in the winter?*

**Bret Adams:** My first winter, minus 75, with the wind chill. Where tools were snapping in half in the flightline. We had inspector general came in that first winter. Actually called off the inspection one day because it was so cold. I joke about it with people but it was serious stuff. It was business as usual, generating aircraft. It was surreal, I guess, in one word.

*Tell us a little bit about your training. I know you were in ROTC in college. Did you have to go to any sort of Officer Candidate School during that time?*

**Bret Adams:** I wasn't actually in ROTC. My future wife, my ex-wife, she was. I went to OTS, is what it was called. Officer Training School. Thirteen weeks at the time.

*Where was that held?*

**Bret Adams:** San Antonio. It was a little annex across the highway from Lackland Air Force Base. I believe they shut that down years ago. That was my indoctrination into the military and it was eye opening.

*Was that after you had graduated from college?*

**Bret Adams:** Yes.

*So you graduated, you went and did your 13 weeks, and upon graduation you got commissioned?*

**Bret Adams:** I had graduated from the university and was working, actually, in Dallas for a short while. About a year and a half. Then that's when I went in and went down to the training and then it was late August of '85 when I got commissioned. And then we drove up about a week later, drove up to North Dakota.

*What time of year was it that you drove up there?*

**Bret Adams:** Probably early September of '85.

*So it hadn't gotten really super cold yet?*

**Bret Adams:** No. Fortunately. We might have turned around and come back.

*What was your specialty at that point?*

**Bret Adams:** Our Air Force Specialty Code was a 7024, which, I think at the time, was solely admin. While I was in they started kind of merging it with personnel. So I was initially responsible for all the administrative programs in the unit. The first one was an aircraft maintenance unit, 300-plus people. Anything dealing with promotions, awards and decorations, security, fitness, weight management, all those.

*That was well before the Internet and computers. So I imagine you're using typewriters, carbon paper . . .*

**Bret Adams:** Yes. Triplicate. Yeah.

*A lot harder then, I would think, than today, where it's much more streamlined.*

**Bret Adams:** I would say so. You made a mistake and you had to start over.

*Like fitness reports now are done all on computer, you know, and everything you've forwarded along to the next person. Travel claims and such, there's very little that you have to keep paper-wise, so much is electronic now. I don't envy you for that.*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah. It was challenging.

*In North Dakota, at Minot, tell us a little about what the base was like at that time. You mentioned Strategic Air Command. That was during the Cold War and the Russians and that sort of thing. Tell us a little bit about what that base was like then. How many people were there, what a typical day was like, that sort of thing?*

**Bret Adams:** I don't recall the numbers. It was dual wing base. There was a bomber wing and a missile wing. The bombers were the B-52s that we had. Also with tankers that supplied the fuel. And then, the missile wing was the wing responsible for the intercontinental ballistic missiles that we had. And then, we also had a fighter squadron up there and an air rescue squadron attached to us.

*So it's certainly a substantial base.*

**Bret Adams:** Absolutely. I would easily guess maybe five to six thousand personnel. We had a one-star general in charge of everything. Always a lot going on. I remember looking back on it, I felt overwhelmed at times, but I feel lucky to have been there because there was so much and I learned. I got to be around and participate in things that I think the average person doesn't get to.

*Especially now since the base realignment closures. They closed so many Air Force bases. I know Minot's still there but I think it's a lot smaller than it used to be. You probably saw the Air Force at its peak in terms of size and strength in the mid to late '80s, before they downsized everything. There's so many of those bases now that are ghost towns or they've been . . . Just look at Bergstrom now. It's gone. It's an airport. Many people don't even remember that was an Air Force base.*

**Bret Adams:** In fact, I went there. My second or third year at Minot, I was president of the Junior Officer Council and drove all the way down here with two other guys, and went to a weeklong conference at Bergstrom. They had F-4 fighter planes there. So I was a little surprised when I moved here a couple of years ago and heard, oh, it's no longer an Air Force base.

*That's right. The only thing that's left is that one circular building that they turned into the hotel. Everything else is, the runways are there and that's it. Everything else is gone. Incidentally, the group, I think it was the Clash, they had the song, "Rock the Casbah." They filmed that in Austin. And in that video there's a scene with a couple of F-4s flying and they're getting ready to land at Bergstrom. If you ever see that video, look it up on YouTube or something.*

**Bret Adams:** Now I can look it up on the Internet.

*There's a couple of F-4s in there from Bergstrom. It's interesting you mentioned that. So you're at Minot, how many years do you spend there?*

**Bret Adams:** It was approximately four.

*Four years. Did you enjoy it?*

**Bret Adams:** Yes and no. Aspects of it were, again, it was my first taste of the military. They throw a lot on you, at least at that time they did. Young, whatever I was, mid-20s. You get a lot of responsibility thrown on you. If I had to do it over, I think I would go through ROTC because I believe that takes you through at a slower pace and you get to learn more of what the real Air Force, the real military is, and in 13 weeks there's only so much you can learn.

*You did your 13 weeks. Did you go to any sort of follow-on school before you went to your assignment?*

**Bret Adams:** No. After I went to my first assignment, I had been there maybe a month or two and I went down to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, for about eight or 10 weeks of Administrative Officer School. And then, a few years later, I went to Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama for a leadership school called Squadron Officer School. That's a seven or eight-week class. Nothing else prior to that.

*So you really got there, you did 13 weeks and boom, you're there.*

**Bret Adams:** I had the training environment all in my mind and here was the real thing. Missiles and jets, and had a lot thrown in my lap. Not too many people to go to and ask, "Hey, what's the best way to do this?" Kind of had trial by fire, I believe.

*Sure. At that time, was your wife stationed there as well?*

**Bret Adams:** She was, yeah.

*What was her type of job?*

**Bret Adams:** Public affairs.

*Public affairs.*

**Bret Adams:** In fact, she is still doing public affairs at the Pentagon now.

*Okay. Still in it.*

**Bret Adams:** She stayed in.

*So when you're there at Minot, were you at some point hoping that someday you'd get to a warmer climate?*

**Bret Adams:** Absolutely. Probably after the first winter. It was, I want to make sure I say past tense, I don't know if it's changed, but it was difficult to be assigned with a spouse at that time. There was no guarantee. They never told you they will. They would try to assign you together so you kind of got, you know, take what you were given. Thus, we went to Minot. Maybe

individually we could've gone to a warmer climate but we wanted to be together and so it kind of went that way.

*Where did you go to next, after Minot?*

**Bret Adams:** Next assignment was Ankara, Turkey. I think I've told several people in the past that if I had 10 more assignments after that, that would still be my favorite.

*Tell us a little bit about that.*

**Bret Adams:** Fascinating country. The people are wonderful. The food is wonderful. The history is wonderful. I'm still in touch with former neighbors who are here in the States now. Just an amazing place. At the time, a very small element was anti-American, anti-military. But your average Turk would welcome you as if you were a member of the family. Our landlord, on a regular basis, would have us over and treat us to Turkish coffee or tea.

*So you lived out in the civilian population?*

**Bret Adams:** We lived in an apartment, a three bedroom, spacious, out among the folks in downtown Ankara. Wonderful experience.

*What years was that from?*

**Bret Adams:** '89 to '91. I took part in Desert Shield/Desert Storm at that time. Everything, it was just a wonderful experience.

*That's certainly got to be different than what people are experiencing over there now, I believe. In Turkey things have changed quite a bit, haven't they?*

**Bret Adams:** I would think so. The political climate, quite a bit has changed.

*So you saw a different part of Turkey. You had the same type of responsibility there as you did at Minot?*

**Bret Adams:** It changed a little bit. While I was at Minot, one of my positions was section commander. It just gives you more authority, Article 15 authority, things like that. So when I went initially to Turkey, I was in a role as a section commander at the 2003<sup>rd</sup> Communications Group. I think I had been there four to six months and I was asked to go over and work for the General, TUSLOG, The United States Logistics Group, and I was asked to be the director of personnel. I didn't hesitate to accept that.

*How many airmen did you have working for you then at that point?*

**Bret Adams:** At the com group, I believe it was five or six that reported to me and we were responsible, at that time, for all the administrative personnel programs. That headquarters there was responsible for all the communications units throughout the country. Then when I went across the street to the headquarters for TUSLOG then I had to shift gears and the personnel that I dealt with, all the Air Force personnel in the country. So I had to learn a lot in a short amount of time. So, another challenge.

*You mentioned you were there when the Persian Gulf War, Desert Shield/Desert Storm flared up. Tell us a little bit about those days. Especially in August of 1990 when Saddam invaded Kuwait. What was that like, being so close to that?*

**Bret Adams:** Another surreal moment. I remember reading message traffic and trying to keep abreast of what was going on. I wanted to get more involved. I even volunteered to go down to Saudi but my boss said no, he wanted me to stay there. He never told me why. I think possibly because my ex-wife, she was being sent down south of the border. I just guess maybe he just didn't want us both down there at the same time. Not really sure.

*Did you see a lot of troops flow through your base?*

**Bret Adams:** Not specifically through our base but I did go to another location and we were all there. Every branch of the service and a lot of assets. That was an eye-opening experience.

*Isn't one of the other big bases in Turkey Incirlik?*

**Bret Adams:** Yes.

*And how far was that from Ankara?*

**Bret Adams:** Very close. Like a stone's throw.

*Really?*

**Bret Adams:** I mean very close to the border. Much closer than Ankara. Ankara is up more to the middle.

*So like an hour away?*

**Bret Adams:** If that.

*Really? I didn't realize it was that close. Is that the base they use a lot to transport folks through?*

**Bret Adams:** Right.

*So when all that's going on, you have a desire to get down to Saudi Arabia. Your wife, though, goes. What type of . . .*

**Bret Adams:** She was escorting DVs, VIPs, across the border, along with media. She was their interface so she was quite often popping down and then she'd come back and then go back down.

*It's really not that long ago, but it was long enough ago that you didn't have cell phones or email. What type of communication did you have? Just occasional phone calls?*

**Bret Adams:** Right. Occasional phone call. In fact, I just remembered that I got a phone call, not from her, from somebody else. She'd been in an accident. She had been back up in the, we called the staging base, the Incirlik. She was out driving with someone and a young Turkish boy ran out in front of them. They hit the young boy. He was okay, but it was a very tense time and my boss

came to me and took me down there without hesitation just to go. There was a little delay there in what she was doing, what I was doing, but everything, fortunately, worked out.

*They said, "Is the deadline near?" Because I remember here in the United States President Bush had imposed that deadline and everybody seemed really aware of that and things were building up. How did it change at your base, in terms of security and mindset and everything, knowing that the war was getting ready to happen?*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah. The threat jumped through the roof, if you will. We had several briefings I know that I attended about personal safety and security.

*Were you still living out in town?*

**Bret Adams:** Yes. There was no base housing, per se. There might be 500 people on the installation, smack dab in the middle of a city, pretty much. We were told to alter our routes daily, to and from. Stop wearing the uniform in the vehicle. That was extremely unnerving. Every morning, to go out hands and knees, check under my car, but it was what we had to do to ensure our safety. That continued all the way up through when we kicked off Desert Storm.

*When the invasion happened, where were you? Do you remember where you were that day?*

**Bret Adams:** I was in our apartment early in the morning. Phone rang and it was my wife's boss giving us a certain recall message. As soon as I hung up, my boss called and we, within 10 minutes, had our stuff out the door to the base. Long days thereafter.

*I remember that being kind of the first televised war conflict for most Americans. Everybody was watching CNN at that time. Were you watching CNN too?*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah. I actually went down the hall to our intel office and they had that on. It was interesting to see their reaction to what was being said.

*Bernard King and Peter Arnett, some of those guys, were actually in Baghdad reporting, supposedly from a hotel.*

**Bret Adams:** We didn't think very much of Mr. Arnett at the time.

*Yeah, exactly. I remember him saying they had bombed the baby milk factory or something like that. That was interesting. So everything definitely ratcheted up, the war is going on. Tell us about how long that went on. Was there a certain point that after it was over, things kind of de-escalated a little bit at your base?*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah. I don't recall exactly when, I know it was later in the year, later in '91. The threat came down but we were still advised to take certain precautions. I don't remember exactly when. Certainly by the summer. Late spring, I would say. Because I got reassigned that summer and I do remember that things were close to being back to normal.

*How long did your wife end up spending in Ankara?*

**Bret Adams:** I left from there to the leadership school in Alabama and that was basically prior to our reassignment in England. She was right behind me.

*So you got to go from Turkey to England then? You seem like you got lucky. You did a little bit of a hardship tour in Minot but then Turkey and England are not bad.*

**Bret Adams:** Making it up to us.

*Tell us a little about England, where you were there.*

**Bret Adams:** Beautiful. Our daughter was born there, in fact.

*What was the name of the base?*

**Bret Adams:** Mine was Lakenheath. Royal Air Force Lakenheath. She was at Mildenhall. She was just down the road a few miles. We had F-111s at the time and I was there when we transitioned to the F-15E, a new model. Very nice. Her base was more of a transport location.

*Was your base kind of a joint base with the British?*

**Bret Adams:** No. It was all U.S. They would come sometimes as guests, but it was all American assets.

*You still had kind of the same role there as you had at Minot and Ankara?*

**Bret Adams:** No. Actually it was the protocol officer, so I was in charge of all the special ceremonies and any DVs, distinguished visitors, VIPs that came on. So whether if it was the four-star in charge of the Armed Forces of Europe came to visit. At the time, Secretary of Defense Cheney came. That was one of our, probably our biggest visit. Secretary of Air Force Rice, Dr. Rice, came. Members of Parliament, people like that would come and I was the guy that had to organize the whole thing.

*That can be kind of stressful, I guess. Now you're boss.*

**Bret Adams:** I've had delayed gray hair, I think. It's just coming out. Yeah, and working for the base commander. He was demanding at times, but understandably so. He wanted things to go right.

*Sure. How many troops did you have working for you then at that point, to help put these ceremonies together?*

**Bret Adams:** Directly? None. So that was a challenge.

*So you had to go task other units to help you.*

**Bret Adams:** That's a challenge. To remind them who you work for and why you need their help. So I think I found it helped if I went to the commander of the unit first and said, "Hey sir, I need some help here." And then I could go talk to the folks.

*That way you don't have to go to your boss to have him call him, that type of thing. What type of ceremonies would you put together, like when Secretary Cheney came? Describe to us kind of that whole show.*



**Bret Adams:** It was just, he came to visit. We would have a couple of aircraft out in one of the hangars so the flight crew out there. We used the term “dog and pony show.” I don’t know if that’s still used. Probably is. He came in and my boss was there and some of the top fliers were there. Just a quick, we call “grip and grin.” Got the photo ops, he up in the stage, made some comments to folks. We had some of the dependents come on out to the hangar. We had all his folks, his staff were there. He came in, gave a briefing to, basically the commanders on base, of the different units. Similar thing with Dr. Rice. Kind of gave him a tour of the base. He made some remarks as well and then we had meeting and a briefing with the key people on base. As far as the purpose of it, behind the scenes, it was more for funding. To keep the base in the limelight and say, “Hey, we need this funding because this is why it’s important that we’re here and we need these assets.” Part of the reason we transitioned to F-15E model is those two visits.

*Really? That’s interesting. Because you had before that, the F-111s?*

**Bret Adams:** Right.

*They pretty much phased those out completely, didn’t they?*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah. I don’t even know if they’re still flying them.

*I don’t think they are. Wasn’t that the kind of sweep-wing bomber type?*

**Bret Adams:** Sweep wing and the weapons system officers sat side by side with the pilot. But the E model was the two seater. They would sit behind the pilot. Completely different, I would say different role. Capability, of course, is night and day.

You enjoyed being in England?

**Bret Adams:** I did. Lots of different history there. I enjoyed that. We had a very nice house, nice neighbors. I’ve joked with people, there were three pubs within walking distance of our house, and I felt very lucky to be welcomed into the community by going over to these locations, and I was welcomed with pretty much open arms, and it was nice. It was comforting.

*How was the weather there?*

**Bret Adams:** It was not what everybody said it was. It wasn’t always like today. It wasn’t all this rain and dreariness. There was a little bit of it but there was more sunshine than rain.

*I think everybody pictures Sherlock Holmes and the fog and the dreariness.*

**Bret Adams:** We had a little bit of fog. There were some foggy days driving to work but most of the time was mild, enjoyable weather.

*How about the food?*

**Bret Adams:** The food, yeah, leaves a lot to be desired but . . .

*Kind of bland I guess.*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah, even though you go to the pubs and try some of the local fare and after a while it's pretty much the same thing. No comparison having enjoyed the food in Turkey so much.

*That kind of fits with what I would have expected you to say about British food. So at this point, you're in England. What year is this now, '92-ish?*

**Bret Adams:** Right. It was '91 up to, left there in '94.

*And that's when all the base realignment closure type stuff was going on which you've mentioned.*

**Bret Adams:** I got affected by that, right. Gramm-Rudman Act I believe is what it was called, named after a couple congressmen that initiated it. I think that was '92 when my boss called me in and told me I was in the year group, 1985. They decided they needed to downsize that by about 85% I think is what the figure was. So it doesn't take a math major to see what your odds are, and he gave me as long as I needed to decide, did I want to try to ride it out or get out on my own, and I thought about it for a few days and just thought, "There's just . . ."

*Yeah.*

**Bret Adams:** I just figured it better to have a little control over my destiny than none, and I actually knew six guys there that tried to ride it out and were let go.

*How did that process work for them, if you tried, as you say, to ride it out? I guess you re-up more or less but you don't know exactly when you're going to be let go?*

**Bret Adams:** In their case they were given basically 30 days to leave country, and they were given a separation amount. I opted for annuities so I had to give reserve time for close to twice the amount of time I had been in active duty, and then every year I got a check. It's not what I wanted but . . .

*Sure. So when did you leave active service?*

**Bret Adams:** Officially was November of '09 when I finally got my second notification that I was being honorably discharged.

*But when you left England, it was when?*

**Bret Adams:** When I left England was when my wife at the time got reassigned back stateside, summer of '94 I believe it was. But I got out before that.

*Did you remain in England for a while?*

**Bret Adams:** I did. I got out, I think it was '92 or so, and then I was working for AAFES, Army and Air Force Exchange Service. I was a training instructor with them. So I still was around, and that was kind of strange because some of my colleagues were still there, still active duty, still flying, and I was wearing a coat and tie. It wasn't an easy transition for me. I had every intention to stay in 20 years and work toward becoming a unit commander.

*That had to have been a tough time for a lot of folks, not just yourself, the downsizing that was going on everywhere. Now your wife wasn't affected by that though?*

**Bret Adams:** Because she went through a different commissioning source.

*So the ROTC folks were treated a little differently than . . . What were officers like yourself called if you weren't ROTC commissioned?*

**Bret Adams:** I think I was considered reservist, even though I was active duty.

*Still held a reserve commission?*

**Bret Adams:** Right.

*OK, that makes sense. They do the same thing in the Marine Corps. Unless you go through, unless you come out of the Naval Academy, you know. Naval Academy grads get a direct commission. Everybody else has a reserve commission, and then after their first tour on active duty, they do what they call augmenting, where you go ahead and stay in, and you can go through the augmentation process and get a regular commission. But it shows no difference the whole time you're serving, whether you're regular commission or reserve commission, just on paper. But in your case, and I guess it would happen too in the Marine Corps if they do the draw-down, then they would probably start cutting the reserve commission guys first, which I guess is what happened with you all then?*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah, that's what I believe happened. And I was doing the same job that every other person was and making the same base pay as my wife was. I mean she only outranked me by four weeks so.

*Yeah, there's no difference. It's just where you got your commission from.*

**Bret Adams:** Yeah, that was a tough time for me because after finally making the adjustment way back in Minot, I had every intentions to try to get into a field, and I actually had a unit commander who was gonna kind of sponsor me, and I was gonna get into either supply or logistics, to the school. And he was gonna sponsor me, get me in there, and have me come over and work part-time in his place to get a feel for things 'cause I was telling him and my boss I wanted to be a unit commander one day, and so that kind of started up and then a month or two later, I was faced with that, and it was like, "Well, things happen."

*Circumstances beyond your control at that point. The draw-down or what did they call, the peace dividend I think was the name they used at that time. So then at that point, did you have an option? I don't know how it works in the Air Force, to actually join a reserve unit? Were there Air Force reserve units you could go to?*

**Bret Adams:** No, I think what they had me as inactive reserve. I was in one component for three years or so. I never had to do the weekend a month. I remember asking about it and they said, "No." They didn't need me, they'd let me know if they did. Every year I was notified . . .

*So even that I guess had been drawn down.*

**Bret Adams:** I think so.

*You didn't really even join a . . . I don't know how the Air Force works, if they have real reserve units. I guess there are Air National Guard units and that sort of thing which are more state units.*

**Bret Adams:** I'm not sure but I knew, 'cause the next place we went was Colorado. My wife was stationed at Peterson, and there was Cheyenne Mountain, there was the Academy, so I could have done something there but it seemed like I wasn't needed so I was kind of, "Okay, I'll wait until they call me up one of these days." And they kept track of me. Every year I got a letter in the mail, I had to respond letting 'em know I was still okay, I could still perform my duties. Kept my uniform, two sets of everything in my closet just in case.

*There you go. How did you end up back in Texas? What brought you back to Texas? Did Texas feel like home to you? You had gone to college here but you had been from all over.*

**Bret Adams:** You're right. My ex, after Colorado, got reassigned to Texas. She went to the base up in Wichita Falls, Sheppard, and that's when we split and I came down to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and have been in this part of the country ever since.

*That's great. Well, I appreciate you coming in to do an interview with us. We have archives here, I don't know if I mentioned it or if you heard me mention it at the symposium, but we have archives here that go back to the 1600s. We have Spanish land grants. We have the original registro that Stephen F. Austin kept in his own hand of all the settlers that came to Texas with him. We have the land grant that David Crockett's widow received when he was killed at the Alamo. They are all held in this building here. And so our goal is to take all these interviews and save them for posterity, and hopefully hundreds of years from now people can listen to these interviews. We've interviewed everybody from present conflicts to World War II, every branch of service, every walk of life, enlisted, officer, you name it. Our goal is hopefully they will learn something from these interviews. With that in mind, is there anything you would want to say to somebody maybe a hundred or two-hundred years from now listening to this interview about your service or just anything in general.*

**Bret Adams:** I'm still to this day proud of having served. I wish I could have served longer. The opportunities that I had I think are unparalleled. As I said earlier, you know at such a young age, the authority, primarily the responsibility, the technology, the training that you have available to you, I just think is unsurpassed. I wish more young folks would get into it, get a taste of it, if nothing else, the discipline, and then maybe the pride of your country and what we have that we take for granted too easily. All you gotta do is look at the headlines any day of the week and you can see that we have it so much better than so many others, and I think a lot of it goes back to the strength of our country. Our military has always been strong, and I think it always needs to be.

*Absolutely. Well, I tell you, sir, we appreciate you for your service. This program, too, beyond just saving interviews for posterity is about thanking our veterans for their service. I know from Commissioner Patterson and everyone here at the Land Office, we want to thank you for serving in our military. In about a week or two, actually might be a little longer with Christmas now with slowing people down at work, but we'll be getting you copies of this interview on CD so you can keep or give to friends or whomever so you have permanent record. We'll also have a letter and certificate from Commissioner Patterson that we'll put in a commemorative binder for you. And then ultimately, if you have any pictures that you want us to put on the website, any pictures of*

*you and your time in service, we'd be glad to have those and we'll put those on the website too so anyone can go on there and listen to this interview and see pictures and that sort of thing. So, you've got my card so you can always email those to me or drop them off or whatever. If you email them to us, we can use those or if you want, you can send them to us and we can scan them and return them back to you. If you look at the website, we've done that with probably about half of the interviews, the veterans have sent us pictures. It's always nice to have that, and people listening to the interview, they can see the pictures that go along with what they're listening to. Well, sir, again, I appreciate it, especially the fact that you actually walked over. I don't think we've ever actually had somebody walk here to interview. We've had some folks drive and find a parking meter but you walked over and that's great.*

**Bret Adams:** Well, note that I'm only two or three blocks away.

*That's great. I hope this was worth your time to come in and do this interview and contribute to the archives.*

**Bret Adams:** Oh, absolutely. I appreciate your time. I feel honored and, like I told you before we started, I wasn't sure if I'd get a response because after listening to the gentleman a week or two ago at the Bob Bullock Museum, the Pearl Harbor survivor, to me those are true veterans. I always feel I'm in their shadow when I talk to those guys.

*Well, one thing we try to stress though is we want to interview every Texas veteran we can, and they don't have to have been Audie Murphy or Sergeant York to be somebody we want to interview, and I think Mr. Kamenicky and really of all the veterans I've interview, the common theme of almost all of them is none of them really seem to have an ego about it. They all know that they were placed in circumstances beyond their control, and could have just as easily been you, and your service could have been in a situation like that. Mr. Kamenicky that day being at Pearl Harbor, he was just there by fate. So, I think people who have served in the military understand that. You don't a lot of times choose where you go or what you do, but you chose to serve and that's the important thing, and that's what this program is about.*

**Bret Adams:** I once took my daughter to Pearl Harbor on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, and we were fortunate enough to talk with a couple survivors there. I still have the autograph book that one of them signed for me. I bought a book, and I still remember what he told me and my daughter. He said, "Just remember that freedom is never free."

*That's right.*

**Bret Adams:** I won't forget that and I hope my daughter doesn't.

*That's great. That would be a neat place to be stationed, Hickam Air Force Base.*

**Bret Adams:** That was my ex's second, her assignment after here in Texas. They went over to Hickam.

*That would be like in paradise to be at Hickam.*

**Bret Adams:** It's beautiful there, yeah,

*Well, sir, I appreciate it very much for you coming in.*